

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MOGADI 01410 231505Z
ACTION SS-25

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S E C R E T MOGADISCIO 1410

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS, SO, US
SUBJECT: U.S. MILITARY SURVEY TEAM

REF: STATE 159889

1. I PRESUME SIAD WOULD REGARD A DECISION TO DEFER THE VISIT OF THE U.S. MILITARY SURVEY TEAM AS ONE MORE STEP IN THE VACILLATING COURSE WHICH HAS CHARACTERIZED THE ARMS SUPPLY NEGOTIATIONS. SIAD COULD WITH SOME JUSTIFICATION CONCLUDE THAT WE ARE NOT OR NEVER HAVE BEEN VERY SERIOUS ABOUT MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO SOMALIA. I THINK HE ALREADY BELIEVES THAT AS SOON AS HE HAS ACCEPTED ONE CONDITION, THE U.S. HAS ALMOST IMMEDIATELY POSED ANOTHER. WHETHER HE WOULD REGARD THE DEFERRAL OF THE TEAM'S VISIT AS THE LAST INCREMENT, I CANNOT BE SURE, BUT THERE IS A GOOD CHANCE THAT HE WOULD CONCLUDE THERE IS NO HOPE FOR SUCH AN ARRANGEMENT. I THINK THAT IS THE CONCLUSION HE WOULD REACH.

2. WHAT I BELIEVE ALSO NEEDS BE ADDRESSED AT THIS TIME IS THE USG'S ABILITY TO MOVE SIAD TOWARD A COURSE THE U.S. ADVOCATES - CESSATION OF SUPPORT TO THE INSURGENCY IN THE OGADEN. I DOUGHT OUR EXHORTATIONS ALONE ARE GOING TO BE VERY USEFUL. ASIDE FROM THE ECONOMIC LARGESS, WHICH WE MIGHT HAVE GIVEN TO
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THE SOMALIS ON HUMANITARIAN GROUNDS ANYWAY, SIAD HAS NOTHING TO SHOW FROM THE US FOR HIS ACTION IN EXPELLING THE SOVIETS. IT MAY BE THAT HE NEVER EXPECTED VERY MUCH ON THE MILITARY SIDE, BUT HIS HAND ARE EMPTY, AND OUR LEVERAGE OVER HIS POSSIBLE FUTURE COURSE IN THE OGADEN IS EQUALLY WEIGHTLESS. IN SHORT, I BELIEVE SOME COMBINATION OF THE CARROT AND THE STICK WOULD BE USEFUL IN HELPING US TO ACHIEVE

OUR GOAL. DEFERRING THE ARRIVAL OF THE TEAM, WHOSE VISIT COMMITS US TO NOTHING ANYWAY AS SIAD WELL KNOWS, REMOVES THE CARROT.

3. THE SURVEY TEAM'S VISIT AS THE DEPT. WILL RECALL WAS STRICTLY A U.S. INITIATIVE. SIAD WAS NEVER VERY DELIGHTED ABOUT IT, AND EVEN LESS SO WHEN THE TERMS OF REFERENCE AND POSSIBLE SUPPLY CATEGORIES WERE ANNOUNCED TO HIM. IN SPITE OF HIS LACK OF ENTHUSIASM, HE HAS ACCEPTED THE ENTIRE PROPOSAL WITHOUT ANY CONCESSION ON OUR SIDE SAVE A GENERAL OBSERVATION THAT THE TEAM MAY CONSIDER THE WHOLE GAMUT OF SOMALIA'S MILITARY REQUIREMENTS. DEFERRAL OF THE VISIT IS CERTAIN TO CAUSE BITTER DISAPPOINTMENT IF NOT DISILLUSION, AND MAY ERODE FURTHER THE U.S. CREDIBILITY. I CANNOT SAY IT WOULD NOT HAVE AN ADVERSE AFFECT ON THE ENTIRE RANGE OF OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS. BY DEFERRING THE VISIT, THE U.S. WOULD BE TELLING SIAD THAT WE DO NOT ACCEPT HIS ASSURANCES THAT THE SOMALIS ARE NOT SUPPORTING THE INSURGENCY. I DOUBT WE COULD ESCAPE A CONFRONTATION ON THAT ISSUE, AND BELIEVE THE RISK IS SUBSTANTIAL. IF WE ESCHUE A VISIT WE HAVE SO LONG SOUGHT, HIS PROGNOSIS MUST BE THAT THE U.S. IS SEEKING TO RETRACT ITS IMPLIED PROMISES OF SUPPORT.

4. I DOUBT SIAD COULD MOVE IMMEDIATELY TO MEND HIS TIES WITH THE SOVIETS. THE ETHIOPIAN AIR ATTACK OF YESTERDAY ON THE FOUR NORTHERN TOWNS ADDS TO EXISTING ANTI-SOVIET SENTIMENT AND MAKES ANY
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OVERT MOVE AT THIS TIME VIRTUALLY IMPOSSIBLE. SIAD IS ALSO CONSTRAINED BY FOREIGN POLICY CONSIDERATIONS. A REOPENING TO THE SOVIETS WOULD ANTAGONIZE THE SAUDIS, IRANIANS, AND EGYPTIANS WHOSE SUPPORT SIAD VALUES AND NEEDS. I HAVE NO PRECISE INTELLIGENCE ON THE OUTCOME OF SIAD'S WESTERN EUROPE SWING. ALTHOUGH I PRESUME HE WAS TURNED DOWN BY THE BRITISH AND GERMANS, I AM SATISFIED HE IS PROBABLY ALREADY GETTING SOME ARMS SUPPORT FROM THE FRENCH AND ITALIANS. MY ITALIAN COUNTERPART TOLD ME YESTERDAY, JUNE 22, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT ITALY HAS ALREADY DELIVERED THE FIRST 200 OF 600 FIAT 4X4 AND 4X6 TRUCKS TO THE SOMALI ARMY WITH A DOZEN ARMORED CARS ALSO ON THE SCHEDULE. THE FOREGOING DOES NOT MEAN THAT SIAD WILL NOT CONTINUE TO SEEK OPPORTUNITIES, INCLUDING AN OPENING TO THE SOVIETS, IF SUCH APPEAR TO ADVANCE HIS INTERESTS, BUT I DON'T THINK HE HAS A SOVIET CARD TO PLAY IN THE SHORT RUN.

5. THE EMBASSY HAS ALREADY OPENED A CHANNEL TO THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE IN THE EXPECTATION THAT THE SOMALIS WILL ACCEPT THE JULY 10 ARRIVAL DATE FOR THE SURVEY TEAM. IF WE ARE TO CONVEY A NEGATIVE DECISION, HOWEVER, I BELIEVE IT WOULD BEST BE DONE THROUGH SIAD HIMSELF RATHER THAN A SUBORDINATE CHANNEL. HE HAS ALWAYS SEEN HIMSELF AS THE CHIEF NEGOTIATOR ON THE MILITARY SUPPLY RELATIONSHIP. TO LIMIT THE DAMAGE A NEGATIVE DECISION SHOULD BE A PERSONAL LETTER

FROM PRESIDENT CARTER OR FROM SPECIAL EMISSARY MOOSE. THE TEXT SHOULD

MAKE IT CLEAR THAT THE PERCEPTION OF SOMALI SUPPORT FOR THE INSURGENCY

IS SO STRONG AT THIS POINT THAT NO US ADMINISTRATION COULD ACT ON
AN ARMS SUPPLY PROGRAM. IT WILL RANKLE, AND SIAD WILL CONTEND
SUCH PERCEPTIONS ILLUSTRATE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SOVIET PROPAGANDA,
BUT IT IS THE MOST DAMAGE-LIMITING FORMULA I CAN SUGGEST. I HAD
HOPED THAT AN UNCOACHED CODEL LEGETT WOULD CONVEY A STRONG MESSAGE OF
CONGRESSIONAL CONCERN ALONG THESE LINES DURING ITS SCHEDULED VISIT.
(I PRESUME THAT NO MATTER WHAT THE DECISION IS REGARDING THE SURVEY
TEAM VISIT, CODEL LEGGETT WILL STILL COME TO MOGADISCIO.)
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